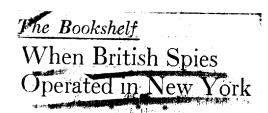
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Every country at war maintains an elaborate secret service to advance its cause by penetrating the enemy's military, political, economic and diplomatic positions - while guarding its own.

The functions of such an agency are farflung and varied, from stealing ciphers and piecing together information about enemy agents by intercepting mail to cultivating influential persons in allied and neutral countries and passing out selected tidbits of propaganda and information to friendly journalists and commentators.

"Room 3603" is a frank account of how Great Britain carried out one phase of such a clandestine operation from a base in New York during World War II. The director was Canada-born Sir William Stephenson, who had been a combet plot in World War I and subsequently acquired a fortune in the field of telegraphic transmission of pictures.

The anthor, a Briton named H. Montgomery Hyde, is a former member of Stephenson's organization and seems to proceed on the "now it can be fold" basis. The result is a story of considerable intrinsic fascination which casts a number of sidelights on the purely nominal character of American neutrality, as interpreted by President Roosevelt.

lt. As Mr. Hyde recognizes, Stephenson's growing organization "represented an obvious threat to United States neutrality." But J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI could not have been more cooperative. Hoover suggested its camourists name. British Security Co-ordination. He placed at Stephenson's dis-posal the FBI wireless channel which pro-vided the only sate Teans of communica-tion with London, and, as Mr. Hyde puts it:

"On a personal basis he (Hoover) worked very closely with Stephenson to further what was then the wholly unneutral purpose of protecting and furthering British interest in the war against Germany and Italy, and he instructed his officers to assist BSC in every way open to them."

Help from "Wild Bill"

Gen. William ("Wild Bill") Donovan was a tower of strength to the British cause in the U.S. during the period of America's formal neutrality. When Donovan went on a fact-finding mission to the Balkans and the Mediterranean area in the spring of 1941 he was accompanied by this enthusiastic recommendation from Stephenson:

"Donovan exercises controlling influence over Knox, strong influence over Stimson, friendly advisory influence over President and Hull. . . Being a Republican, a Catholic and of Irish descent, he has following of the strongest opposition to the Administra-

tion. . . . It was Donovan who was responsible for getting us the destroyers, the bombsight and other urgent requirements. . There is no post through Donovan than through any other individual. . . . He is very receptive and should be made fully aware of our requirements and deficiencies and can be trusted to represent our needs in the right quarters and in the right way in the U.S.A.

No wonder Donovan received an overwhelming red carpet reception from the British authorities. And according to Mr. Hyde, Donovan was instrumental in bringing about an anti-Axis coup in Yugoslavia which may have affected the later course of the war by delaying Hitler's invasion of Russia by some six weeks.

On November 27, 1941, James Roosevelt visited Stephenson with a message from his father which Stephenson telegraphed as follows to London: "Japanese negotiations off. Services expect action within two weeks." Pearl Harbor occurred ten days after this message was delivered, which makes the question of U.S. unpreparedness for this blow still more puring.

In the intervals of playing the perpetual game of hide-and-seek with Nazi agents (a task facilitated by the fact that the British opened mail destined for Europe in Bermuda). Stephenson found time to keep a close water on interpretationist and isolationist organizations in the U.S., and prepared several haressments for America First, among others counteffelting tickets for a rally of that organization in the hope of causing confu-sion.

Aidong other bizarie episodes the author

describes a quick-witted woman operative of nia organization who made a nocturnal rendervous with a confederate in the Vichy naval code and diverted the suspicion of a watchman by taking off her clothes and maying the impression that nothing more politically significant than a liaison was in muspect.

env for a Columnist

There are some interesting data on influucing the American press. In the case of herpopular columnist, Stephenson, accordto the author, was not only able to place thems in his column, but "on occasion to supply him with 'copy' for a part or even the whole of the column itself." Even with this lapse of time it may come as a little surprise io readers of this columnist that they were

a foreign government. Of another named columnist Mr. Hyde writes:

"(He) kept extensive records, both in his head and on his files, of the misdemeanors of important public men, mainly of politicians in Washington. He knew which Senators and Representatives had been financially 'taken care of' by big business lobbyists, and which had been unfaithful to their wives. Moreover, he was said to be adroit at hinting that he would not use the information, if they made a point of telling him now and again what was going on in their offices and departments."

Mr. Hyde explains to the uninitiated the advantages and disadvantages of using the services of "double agents" and gives a hurid account of the training in mayhem, assault and battery, assassination and sabotage given to operatives prepared for work behind enemy lines.

His book offers convincing proof that the British Secret Service in America, in World War, II as in World War I, was a smoothrunning and efficient operation. And he supplies considerable support for those historians who believe that the decision to enter the war against the Axis was, for all practical purposes, taken long before Pearl Har-

being offered not his independent views but the purposes, taken long before Pearl Ha
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The of a foreign government of another Farrar, Straus and Cudahy. 254 pages 1550.